

THE Saturday Magazine.

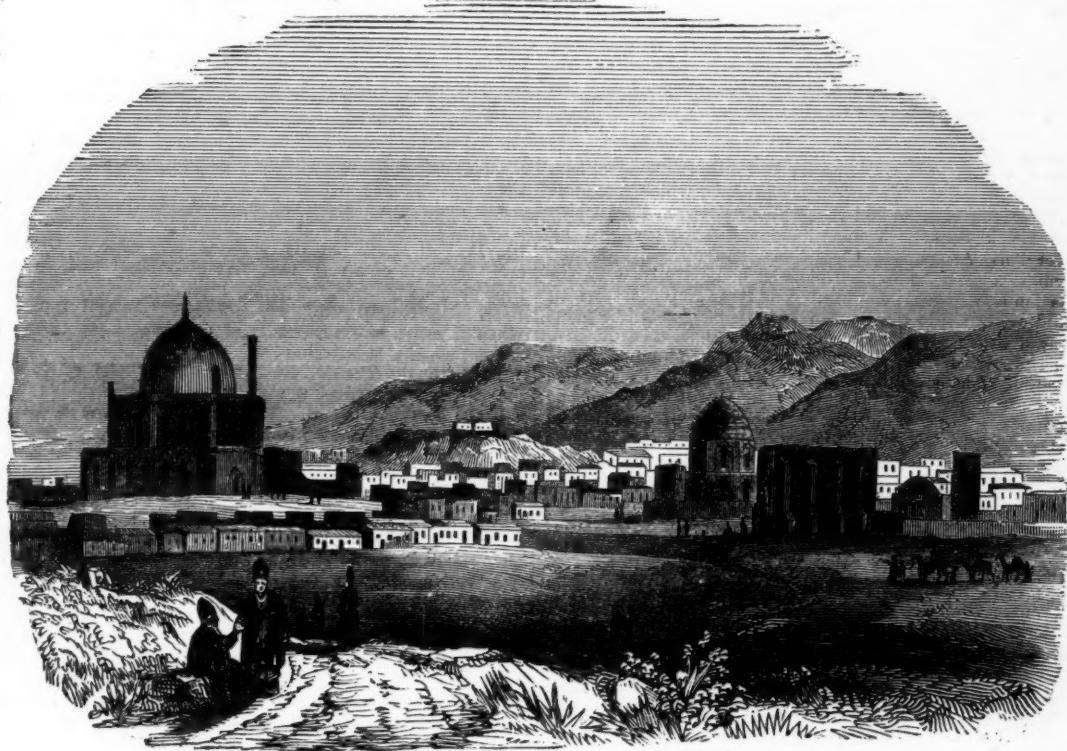
N^o 551. SUPPLEMENT,



JANUARY, 1841.

{ PRICE
ONE PENNY

OVERLAND JOURNEY FROM INDIA TO ENGLAND.



SULTANIEH, IN NORTHERN PERSIA.

FIRST ROUTE.

BY WAY OF THE PERSIAN GULF, THROUGH PERSIA AND RUSSIA, TO ST. PETERSBURGH.

ONE of the most extraordinary features in the political geography of the present age, is the possession by Great Britain of a vast empire situated many thousand miles from the parent country, and separated from it by countries, some of which are mountainous and inhospitable,—others parched and sandy,—and others inhabited by nations and tribes hostile to British interest. Such is *India*, or the *East Indies*. The British empire in India is incomparably larger and more populous than the whole of the British Isles; and it may well be supposed that the establishment of a rapid mode of communication from India to England, is regarded as a matter of high importance by the government. This communication, so far as regards the transport of troops, of military stores, of articles of commerce, &c., must obviously be made by sea; since such conveyance cannot be made through the territories of other nations. The establishment of steam navigation round the coast of Africa;—the project for connecting the Persian Gulf with the Mediterranean, by cutting a canal from the last-named sea to the river Euphrates;—and for connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean, by cutting a canal across the Isthmus of Suez;—all have for their object the attainment of a more speedy water-conveyance from India to England.

But it has often happened in the past history of our Indian affairs, that British officers have been despatched overland from India to England, either for the sake of greater expedition, or for diplomatic services at the court of some one of the Oriental princes whose dominions lay in the line of route. These overland travels are among the most

VOL. XVIII.

interesting narratives which we have of the appearance of the Asiatic towns and cities, and of the manners and customs of the inhabitants; and we have long thought that the readers of our Magazine would welcome a brief and popular account of such routes. The modes in which various officers have proceeded from India vary greatly. Sir Alexander Burnes proceeded from the north-west of India to Bokhara, and from thence to the southern shore of the Caspian Sea:—Sir James Alexander went by sea from Bombay to the Persian Gulf, and from thence through Persia and Asia Minor to Constantinople:—Captain Keppel likewise went by sea from Bombay to the Persian Gulf; but proceeded thence through Persia, Georgia, and the Russian empire to St. Petersburg:—Lieutenant Lumsden, after landing on the shore of the Persian Gulf, proceeded through Persia and Armenia, round the northern shore of the Black Sea, and through Austria and France to England:—Colonel Fitzclarence (now Earl of Munster) went by sea from Bombay to the Red Sea, landed at Cosseir, and travelled through Egypt to the Mediterranean; a similar route to that pursued a few years afterwards by Mrs. Charles Lushington. Other travellers and officers have gone westward from India to Persia, through the imperfectly-known regions which separate them. From this it will be seen that the term “overland journey to England” is capable of many significations.

We propose to select some one particular route, and conduct the reader through it, describing the most interesting objects which occur by the way. By this arrangement, each Supplement will be complete in itself; and we may devote as many Supplements to the topography of Central and Western Asia (for such in reality is the nature of the subject) as the interest of the details will

warrant. On the present occasion we will select the route by sea from Bombay to the Persian Gulf; and thence overland through Persia, Georgia, and Russia, to St. Petersburg; from whence a ship conveys the traveller to England by way of the Baltic Sea.

It will be necessary for the reader to have a tolerably clear idea of the situation of India with regard to the western parts of Asia; and the inspection of a map will greatly aid him in forming this idea. Africa is separated from the south-eastern point of Asia by the Indian Ocean; and into the northern part of this ocean juts the peninsula of India, or Hindostan, which extends northward to the Himalaya mountains. Westward of India are the countries of Beloochistan, Caubul, Bokhara, &c., forming the western boundary of India, and separating it from the Persian empire. From the north-western part of the Indian Ocean, issue two seas, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, each proceeding nearly in a north-westerly direction, and including between them a large peninsula which constitutes Arabia. Northward of the Persian Gulf is Persia, which extends upwards as far as the Caspian Sea. Northward of Arabia is Turkey in Asia, which brings us to the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Between the Caspian and Black Seas, is a mountainous district occupied by Georgians, Armenians, Circassians, and other tribes, and forming a general though ill-defined boundary between the Persian and Russian empires. The river Euphrates, which empties itself into the Persian Gulf, is navigable to a point so near the Mediterranean, in the neighbourhood of Aleppo, that proposals have been made to cut a canal of communication from one to the other. From the Caspian Sea to the nearest point of India, in a straight line, is about one thousand miles; from the northern part of the Persian Gulf, about twelve or thirteen hundred; from the easternmost point of the Black Sea, about two thousand miles. To travel from India to Turkey, therefore, by land, is a long and wearying journey, even if the political situation of the interjacent countries offers no obstacle. It is for this reason that the greater number of "overland" travellers proceed by ship either to the Persian Gulf or to the Red Sea; and from thence reach Europe by land.

Where the passage from India to Persia is made by water, the point of embarkation is generally Bombay. The British empire in India, being too extensive to be governed by one officer, is divided into three *presidencies*, of which the chief cities are Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. Each presidency is under one governor or chief officer, but the governor of Calcutta is superior in authority to the other two, and possesses the title of Governor-general of India. Of the three principal cities just named, Calcutta is at the north-eastern extremity of the peninsula of Hindostan; Madras is on the eastern shore of the peninsula, opposite the Burman empire; and Bombay is on the western shore, and consequently nearer to Europe than either of the other two presidencies. Shipping is found in considerable extent at Bombay; and this is the port from whence the "overland" travellers proceed to the Persian Gulf or to the Red Sea.

From Bombay to the mouth of the Persian Gulf is a distance of about thirteen hundred miles in a straight line; and probably fourteen or fifteen hundred in the direction which a ship would take. We will therefore imagine ourselves to be embarked on board a ship at Bombay, and to have traversed the Indian Ocean which separates India from the Persian Gulf.

The first land at which we arrive is Arabia, which forms the western margin of the entrance to the gulf. This margin proceeds in a tolerably straight line for about four hundred miles in a north-western direction, when it brings us to the narrow strait which forms the immediate opening into the gulf, having Persia on the right hand, and Arabia on the left. About midway on this north-western coast is the Arabian port of *Muscat*, one of the most important belonging to that country. Muscat is the capital of the Arabian province of Oman, which, if not the most celebrated, is the most flourishing and prosperous part of the country. Muscat was taken by Albuquerque in 1507, and remained subject to Portugal till 1648, when the natives drove out the Portuguese. The province is now governed by an *Imam*, or spiritual chief, who seems to exercise his power in a very judicious manner; and the port of Muscat is said to be the best managed of any in Arabia or Persia; for the merchandize of the East may be left undisturbed, or its wharfs and quays without molestation,—a degree of security due to the excellent police of the

place. All the ports upon this coast are tributary to the *Imam* of Muscat; and he has also established a considerable trade with the interior by means of caravans. High rocks on one side, and the island of Muscat on the other, form a spacious and secure harbour. The town is surrounded by a strong wall, within whose precincts none but Arabs and Banians are allowed to reside; all strangers being obliged to remain in houses outside the wall. The town contains a bazaar or market, covered in at the top to protect the wares, which are exposed for sale on open platforms in front of the shops. A large colony of Indians, principally from the banks of the Indus, carry on the wholesale and retail trade. The houses are flat-roofed, and built of unhewn stone. The streets are extremely filthy, and so narrow, that by extending the arms across, both sides may frequently be touched. The inhabitants are affected with a peculiar inflammation of the eyes, arising, it is said, from the light particles of sand blown from the sea-shore. Mr. Buckingham estimated the population at 10,000; while Captain Keppel some years afterwards reduced the number to 2000;—such is the uncertainty which often exists respecting the population of Oriental towns.

On embarking again at Muscat, we proceed north-westerly till we arrive at Cape Muzzedom, the entrance to the Persian Gulf. Nearly opposite this cape is Ormuz, once the seat of a very extensive commerce, and, in the time of Albuquerque, one of the most splendid cities of the East. Subsequent conquests completely ruined it; and when it came into the hands of the present possessors, it did not contain twenty houses.

Entering the Persian Gulf, we pass by the celebrated pearl banks of Bahrein, near the coast of Arabia; and opposite to this, on the Persian coast, is the town of Bushire, where travellers often land who wish to proceed to the eastern parts of Persia. As our route, however, carries us to the regions of the Tigris and the Euphrates, we will leave Bushire, and proceed up the gulf which leads to them. These two rivers, of which we have earlier records than of almost any other rivers in the world, empty themselves into the Persian Gulf by mouths common to both rivers, and thereby form a delta, similar to those at the mouths of the Ganges, the Nile, and the Mississippi. Proceeding a little way up the largest of these, we come to Bassora, a town of much commercial importance, where we will land.

Bassora absorbs nearly all the foreign commerce of Persia and the Euphrates. It is seven miles in circumference, a great part of which space is laid out in gardens and plantations; and is intersected by canals navigable for small vessels. Its most important trade, being that with India, is carried on partly by British, but chiefly by Arabian vessels, of which those of five hundred tons burden can ascend the river to this point. The inhabitants are estimated at 60,000; a heterogeneous mixture of Arabs, Turks, Indians, Persians, and all the people of the East. They have not expended much of their wealth in the embellishment of the city; for travellers describe it as having, generally speaking, a mean and dirty appearance.

In order to give an idea of the appearance, the costume, &c., of the inhabitants, we will describe the public entrance of a Pacha, which took place while Captain Keppel was in Bassora. A body of armed men, forming an advanced guard, announced their approach by a continued discharge of muskets, and passed at a slow trot. Then came another party, who occasionally halted, and danced in a circle; beating time by striking their swords against each other's shields. These were followed by large parties of Desert Arabs, of the Zobeir tribe, preceded by their immediate petty chiefs, on horseback: each of them had carried before him a large red and green flag. The Zobeir Arabs are mercenary troops, and acknowledge a kind of subjection to the governor. They are small mean-looking men, with an Indian cast of features; they carried either fire-arms, or swords and shields; and were habited in various ways—some having on robes bound at the waist with a girdle, others a loose shirt. After these Arabs came the *Toofungees*, or personal troops of the Pacha, distinguishable by fur caps nearly a yard in diameter. Then the Pacha's led horses, richly caparisoned; and after these a troop of mounted Tschousses, or messengers, beating small drums placed at the saddle-bow. These were followed by the native officers of the English factory, mounted. Then came the Capitan Pacha, the Cadi, and the Mufti; and lastly, the Pacha himself, who, with his hand on his breast, acknowledged the shouts of the by-standers. A troop of Janissaries

brought up the rear, amid the firing of muskets, the beating of tom-toms, the rude singing of the soldiery, the music of the Janissaries, and the shrieking of groups of women.

From Bassora we proceed along the Tigris to the famous city of Bagdad, the scene of so much legendary interest. The usual mode of proceeding from one town to the other, is on board one of a fleet of boats which go in company, in order to protect the passengers from the attacks of the tribes of wandering Arabs who infest the banks. Sometimes, however, a party of travellers hire a Bughallow, which is a vessel sixty feet long, fourteen wide at the broadest part, and having a low cabin about ten feet square.

Proceeding up the river by either one of these modes of conveyance, we come to the point of confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates, the former being the easternmost of the two. The banks of the river, between Bassora and Bagdad, a distance of between three and four hundred miles, are occupied by tribes of Arabs, in the same state of primitive simplicity as these remarkable people have ever shown; living in mat huts, capable of being moved at a short notice; dressed in a brown shirt with open sleeves, and bound round the loins with a leathern girdle; almost as unacquainted with Europeans as the inhabitants of Central Africa:—such are the Arabs on the banks of the Tigris.

Farther up the river we come to a tract of country which, though now a desert, was once beautified by large and populous cities. Among these we find the ruins of Seleucia and Ctesiphon. The former of these founded its grandeur on the ruin of the more ancient city of Babylon, and contained at one time 600,000 inhabitants. Seleucia was, in its turn, superseded by Ctesiphon; but both have been since so utterly destroyed, that nothing but ruins attest what they once were. These ruins, together with sandy deserts, and occasionally a jungle tenanted by wild beasts, fill up the interval from Bassora to Bagdad: we will therefore suppose ourselves now to have arrived at the last-named city.

The tract of land which separates the Tigris from the Euphrates, during the lower portion of their course, is rather narrow, and very flat and level; so that in the rainy season the two rivers frequently overflow, and irrigate the land, whereby it becomes very luxuriant. It is probably this circumstance which gave to this strip of land so high importance in ancient times. Under the names of Babylonia, Chaldea, and Mesopotamia, it was a region covered with famous cities, which were celebrated both in sacred and profane history. Of these large cities, the only one which is at present a place of much importance is Bagdad, a spot which is not connected with the times mentioned in the Sacred Records, but which some centuries afterwards became the seat of the Caliphs.

The city of Bagdad stands on both sides of the Tigris, the western or ancient part being now regarded as a kind of suburb to the more modern part, which stands on the eastern bank of the river. The form of the new city is an irregular oblong, about 1500 paces in length, and 800 in breadth; and a brick wall, five miles in circumference, encloses the two towns, which have a wretched bridge of communication between them, formed of pontoons. At the principal angles of the wall are round towers, with smaller towers intervening at short distances: and on these towers batteries of cannons are placed. There are three entrance-gates through this wall to the town; one on the south-east, one on the north-east, and a third on the north-west. Intricate as are the streets in most Oriental towns, they are still more so in Bagdad; for, with the exception of the bazaars and some open squares, the interior is little else than a labyrinth of alleys and passages. The streets are unpaved, and in many places so narrow that two horsemen can scarcely pass each other; and as it is seldom that the houses have windows towards the street, and as the doors are small and mean, they present on both sides the gloomy appearance of dead walls. All the buildings, both public and private, are constructed of furnace-burned bricks, of a yellowish red colour, taken chiefly from the ruins of the neighbouring ancient cities. A house is generally laid out in ranges of apartments opening into a square interior court, and furnished with subterranean rooms, into which the inhabitants retreat during the day for shelter from the intense heats of summer. The tops of the houses have terraced roofs, on which the inmates take their evening meal, and often sleep in the open air. As the houses are but thinly scattered over the area enclosed by the city wall, there is a large extent of garden ground, which produces pomegranates, grapes, figs, olives, dates, and other Oriental fruits in great perfection. As in

all Mohammedan cities the mosques are conspicuous, so are they in Bagdad, where the number is said to amount to as many as one hundred. These mosques are, in their external and internal features, much like those of Turkey generally; but a deficiency of splendour is observable in most of them. The khans or caravanserais amount to about thirty in number; the baths or hummums to about fifty; and there are several bazaars.

The manners and customs of the inhabitants closely resemble what we are accustomed to meet with in Oriental cities. An English officer and his friends having solicited the honour of an interview with the Pacha, the Pacha's secretary sent some of his servants to accompany the visitors. On entering the gates of the palace, they came into a spacious court, where the Pacha's troops were drawn up, to present arms to the English visitors. On arriving at the gates of the inner court, they dismounted; the principal officers of the palace then ushered them through a double row of Janissaries, into the presence of the Pacha. The hall of audience was fitted up in the usual Oriental style, and decorated with numerous small looking-glasses. In one corner of the room was seated the Pacha, supported by cushions. Chairs were placed for the visitors; who were likewise favoured by being allowed to keep on their hats and *shoes*. With regard to this latter custom we may remark, that the removal of shoes from the feet on entering an Eastern apartment is not so wholly ridiculous as Europeans are sometimes apt to suppose; for as the meals are served up on trays laid on the floor, there is obviously a reason for keeping the floor as clean and unsmeared as possible. The visitors were then regaled with the usual delicacies of an Eastern city; and took their leave after a courteous reception from the Pacha.

We must now leave Bagdad for the north, and will take the same route as Captain Keppel, who went some distance eastward of the direct course, in order to visit the royal city of Teheran, near the southern coast of the Caspian Sea. The manner in which Captain Keppel and his friends travelled, was to form a kind of caravan among themselves. They purchased three tents, hired twenty-four mules to carry their servants and baggage, and provided themselves with two saddle-horses each. They then proceeded on their journey, having received a *firman* from the Pacha, exempting them from all tolls and exactions till they reached the frontiers of the Persian empire.

After leaving Bagdad, we arrive at the ruins of the ancient city of Artemita, the favourite city of Chosroes, king of Persia, in the time of Heraclius. The first ruin seen, is a square mound of bricks, facing the cardinal points, which was probably the site of some temple in the suburbs of the city. A mile beyond this mound are numerous others, arranged with such regularity as to seem to indicate a succession of streets at some former period. At the western extremity of these ruins is a mound larger than the rest, supposed to have formed the foundation for the royal residence. Before and about this mound are several large grassy plats, which appear not to have been built upon, and which were probably gardens belonging to the palace. The whole of the mounds are surrounded by what appear to be the vestiges of a wall, with circular bastions, and here and there vacancies which were probably occupied by gates. This place is now called by the Arabs Kurustur.

Proceeding northward from Kurustur, we come to Shehreban, a town situated in such an unprotected plain, that it is liable to repeated attacks from the marauding Arabs and Koords living in the neighbourhood. The city, therefore, which had been some time previously one of the most flourishing in the Pashalic of Bagdad, contained only three families at the time Captain Keppel and his friends visited it. Near Kurustur is a singular-looking building, formed of bricks about fourteen inches square, and connected together by a hard and beautiful cement. The eastern side of this building presents sixteen well-formed bastions, twelve of which are yet entire; and the eastern face shows a flat wall, with a regular ascent up to each bastion. Each bastion is about thirty feet high; and the spaces between the bastions are fifty-eight feet. What was the original purpose of this building we cannot now learn: the Arabs, with their usual love of the supernatural, state that it is inhabited by *genii*, who cut off the heads of all who presume to enter within certain loop-holes which are visible in the walls.

Shortly after passing this place, we arrive at the boundary between the Turkish and Persian empires, and which was likewise the boundary between the celebrated empires of

Assyria and Media, upwards of 2000 years ago. Here an incident occurred to the party of Captain Keppel, which, as it illustrates the predatory habits of the inhabitants of those districts, and the nefarious agreements often entered into between them and the governors of Turkish or Persian provinces, we will relate in that gentleman's own words :—

" Soon after daybreak, as Mr. Lamb and I were riding together, some hundred yards in advance of our party, three men on horseback came suddenly into the road from among the rocks, at one of the narrow passes of the mountain, fifty paces in advance of us, and seemed to regard us with no small degree of attention. He who appeared to be the chief of the party, was mounted on a black horse. They continued to march a short distance before us for several miles, frequently slackening their pace till we came up, and then moving on more briskly.

" When we arrived near the end of our stage, they turned back, and allowed us to pass, giving the usual traveller's salutation of ' Peace !'—a phrase little in consonance with their hostile intentions. After we had passed them some distance, they struck into the mountains, and were soon out of sight.

" Our conjectures respecting them, as it afterwards appeared, were not without foundation. On our arrival at Kermanshah, a young Arab chieftain informed us, that twenty Koords of the Calor tribe, one of the most numerous and powerful of Koordistan, had followed us from Khanaki, for the express purpose of plundering our party, and of murdering us if we made any resistance; of this party twelve were on horseback, and eight on foot, armed with matchlocks. The chief, who he told us rode a black horse, exactly coincided in description with the person we had seen. The Arab said they had been watching night and day for a favourable opportunity to put their plan into execution; but always finding us so much on our guard, had never thought fit to make the attempt, and had been ultimately obliged to abandon their purpose, on arriving at the mountain pass of Pac-Tackht, where a military force was stationed.

" Their chief inducement to attack us, was the intelligence they had received from Bagdad, that our party consisted of an ambassador and his suite, travelling with a large treasure; the danger we were led into by this honour is another of the obligations we owe to Aga Sakeis. They were deterred from attempting their purpose, by the dread of the European officers at Kermanshah revenging our deaths, and their extravagant notions of European prowess and skill in arms; which (notwithstanding their numbers) made them consider the result of an attack too doubtful to hazard, even for the abundant harvest they expected to reap." On questioning the informant farther, it was found that he was himself an intimate friend of the leader of the band, but had divulged their secret from a sense of gratitude to the English for services received from Mr. Rich, British resident at Kermanshah; and also that the band was under the protection of one of the principal courtiers at Kermanshah, who shared in its booty, and shielded it, through his influence in that corrupt government.

We now approach the city which we have lately frequently mentioned, and proceed to give a description of it, chiefly from the observation of Mr. Buckingham.

Kermanshah is situated on three or four gentle hills, at the foot of a range which is passed on approaching it from the west; so that it contains within its walls some slight and some steep ascents, with eminences of different heights, and their corresponding valleys. To the north and east it is bounded by a beautiful and extensive plain; and on the other side it is enclosed by a range of mountains. The form of the town is irregular, approaching to a circle of about a mile in diameter. The wall which surrounds it is flanked with circular bastions, with turrets, loop-holes, ports, &c.; and this wall is pierced with five gates. One of these gates has the name of Durwazé Nedjef Asheref, meaning the "gate at which a saint dried up the sea." The legend connected with this name, and believed by the ignorant inhabitants of the town, is this :—In the time of Imaum Ali, there was a large lake here, by the side of which a poor man was sitting, shaving the hair from his legs and body, when his razor and stone fell into the water. The Imaum coming by at the time, and witnessing his distress, inquired into the cause of it; and finding that the Faquer was a holy man, ordered the lake to be dried up, which it instantly became at his word, and has remained dry land ever since.

Sixty years ago, Kermanshah was nothing more than a

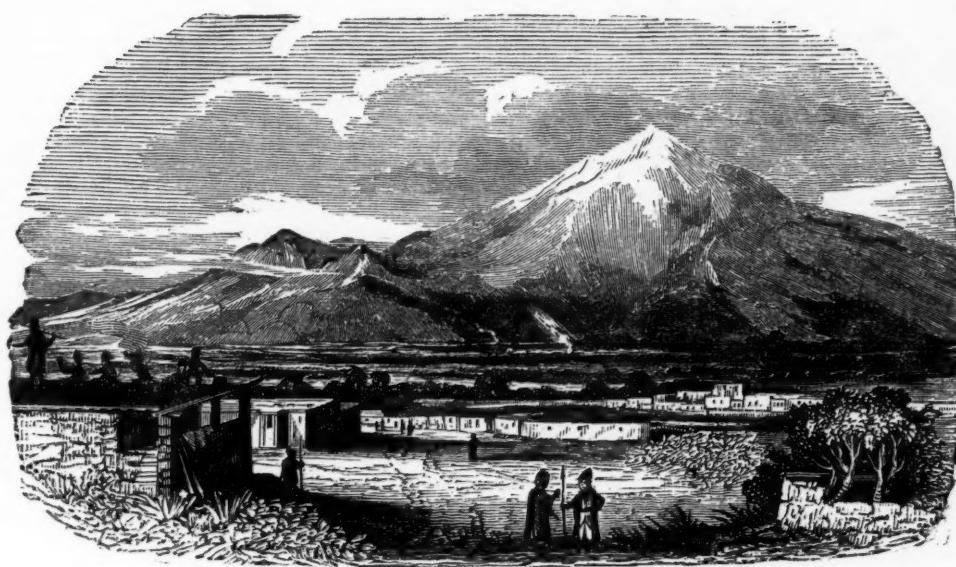
large village, the inhabitants of which subsisted chiefly their agricultural labours in their own plain, and by the feeding of their cattle on the neighbouring pastures. As a frontier town in the west was wanting, however, as a safeguard in case of a war between Persia and Turkey, Kermanshah was fixed upon as the residence of one of the Shah of Persia's sons. Since that period the town has gradually increased in size, in population, and in affluence. During the visit of M. Rousseau, French consul at Kermanshah, in 1807, he estimated the inhabitants at sixteen or eighteen thousand. Twenty years afterwards Mr. Buckingham estimated them at more than thirty thousand.

The prince holds sovereign sway over the neighbouring territory; and is said to be as powerful a governor as the Shah himself. Being in a manner the founder of the town in its present state of opulence, he takes a pride in embellishing it with public works. A large palace, near the centre of the city, for himself, a country-house surrounded by gardens, for his harem, and a spacious mosque near his own palace for the public use, have been built from his own funds, without any extraordinary contributions. The whole range of streets, bazaars, caravanserais, baths, &c., recently erected, are, however, built from funds advanced by their future occupiers, in loans to the prince, on the faith of his promise that the sums shall be accounted for in their annual rents. The prince is therefore the great owner of the land and buildings; and, as his will is law, there is little doubt, as Mr. Buckingham remarks, that the rents will be so regulated as to return him an enormous profit; in which case, instead of a munificent adorer of a city of his own founding, he can only be regarded as a monied speculator, in possession of an unrestrained monopoly.

The prince's palace is situated on one side of a large maidan, or open square, the other three sides of which are occupied by shops, stalls, and entrances to bazaars. The palace front is about a thousand feet in length, and the ascent to its centre is by an inclined plane. Leading off from the top of this ascent are two long causeways or galleries, going all along the front of the building, at the height of fifteen or twenty feet from the level of the square below. The whole of the front is a plain brick wall, excepting only the centre, where two or three stories rise over the door of entrance. Above this entrance is the public divan, which has an open balcony, looking out on the square, and from which the view of the town and the country is commanding and agreeable. Here the prince sits for an hour or two early in the day, to transact public business and receive visits; but as the sun shines strongly on it at that period, it is then always covered by a perpendicular awning or curtain.

The interior fittings of the palace; the baths, with the process (so long and complicated to an European) of bathing; the mosques; the bazaars, &c., at Kermanshah, so nearly resemble what we are accustomed to read of Oriental towns generally, that we pass over those details, quit the town, and conduct the reader onward in his journey.

The direct route from Kermanshah northward would leave Teheran on the right; but as that city is the residence of the Persian Shah, we will accompany Captain Keppel in the route to Russia *via* Teheran. At about five days' journey from Kermanshah, we arrive at Hamadan, another considerable town, the inhabitants of which may be characterized by a brief description of the chief visitors who came to welcome Captain Keppel's party, on the morning after their arrival. The first was the Prince of Hamadan's physician, an elderly man of very amiable manners, and possessing a degree of liberality of opinion and general information rarely to be met with in an Oriental physician: he frankly acknowledged the superior skill of the European physicians, and begged a medical gentleman forming one of the party to prescribe for him. A Jewish Rabbi then paid them a visit, and gave an affecting detail of the persecutions which the Jews suffered from the Mohammedans: his bitter complaints were directed, not so much against the sovereign authority of the place, as against the petty and incessant ill-usage of the mass of the Mohammedan people. Then came the chief of the Armenians resident in the town: the Armenians, as the reader is probably aware, are Christians belonging originally to the districts at the south-east of the Black Sea; and this visitor gave a detail of ill-usage and cruelty similar to that of the poor Jewish Rabbi,—for the "unbelieving Jew," and the "Christian dog," are equal objects of hatred among the Mohammedans,



MOUNT ARARAT.

except that the temporal power and influence possessed by the European Christians make them objects of fear to the Mohammedans. The next visitor was a distinguished Persian, who had been busily engaged in a search for the "philosopher's stone;" and who fancied that the English travellers were engaged in a similar pursuit; since he heard that they had been exploring old ruins, and had by them certain acids and chemical tests with which they determined the geological character of fragments of rock which they from time to time collected. They soon undeceived him; and endeavoured to convince him of the utter worthlessness of the pursuit in which he was engaged. The last visitor we shall name was a money-lender, whom we shall introduce to show the estimation in which the English character is held in Persia for probity and honour in commercial dealings. One of the party wishing to draw a bill on Bagdad, and to get it cashed at Hamadan, sent to inquire how that might be done. A miserable-looking man soon appeared, who from beneath his tattered garments drew forth a bag containing the requisite quantity of gold coin. This he readily gave, and received in exchange nothing more than a piece of paper with an order (in English) for payment at Bagdad. The party wondered at such a proof of unlimited confidence, for the man could not read a word of the order; and were not a little gratified to hear him say in explanation:—"The Ingrees (English) have never been known to deceive." Sir John Malcolm had been some time resident in Persia, and had, by his high personal character, contributed greatly to this favourable impression concerning the honour of an Englishman. We may say in connexion with this subject, that British officers resident in Persia, recommend English travellers in that country to wear English costume, as it generally meets with respect.

From Hamadan a pleasant district conducts the traveller to Teheran, the usual residence of the court of the Shah of Persia. This city occupies a position once forming part of the ancient empire of the Medes, near the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. Its political importance as the seat of government is more striking than the beauty of its situation; for the numerous spring torrents, which pour from the adjacent heights at the beginning of the warm season, saturate the low ground about the town, sink into its vaults, and send up such vapours and dampness as to render the spot very insalubrious during that season of the year.

Teheran is surrounded by a deep ditch, towers, and a mud wall, embracing a circuit of about eight thousand yards. There are four entrance gates, leading respectively to Ispahan, Tabriz, and two mountainous districts: they are plain in structure, with the exception of a few ornamental blue and green tiles. The streets of the city are extremely narrow, and full either of dust or mud, according to the season; the limited width, too, is rendered more inconvenient by the prevalent custom of the nobles to ride through them attended by thirty or forty servants on horse-

back; and by the frequent passage of loaded camels, mules, asses, and sometimes the royal elephants. The imperial palace splendid as it is within, presents a similar want of external elegance to most other Persian dwellings; it is situated in the citadel, a distinct quarter of the city, occupying a square of twelve hundred yards, and surrounded by its own bulwarks, which adjoin the north wall of the town. At one particular part of the city is a large open space or square, full of wide and deep excavations, or rather pits, sunk in the ground. Within the shaft of these well-like places, and round its steep sides, are numerous apertures, leading to subterranean apartments; some the sojourn of poor houseless human beings, and others, a temporary stabling for beasts of burden.

After illustrating the extremely narrow and confined arrangement of the streets, Sir Robert Ker Porter observes: "Where any place does present a little more room than ordinary, or under the covered ways attached to the shops, we generally find one of the national story-tellers, surrounded by groups of people, some well clad, others in rags, and not a few nearly naked, attending with the most lively interest to tales they must have heard a thousand times before. He recounts them with a change of gesticulation, and a varied tone of voice, according to his subject; whether it be the loves of Khosroo and Shireene, the exploits of Rustum their favourite hero, or any number of historic couplets from Terdousi, the Homer of their land. From the humblest peasant, to the head that wears the diadem, all have the same passion for this kind of entertainment."

On leaving Teheran, the route conducts us along a considerable portion of the western shore of the Caspian Sea, through a district of a very mountainous character, and inhabited by rude mountaineers, who have cost Russia more trouble and campaigning than any other of her subjects.

There is no particular town after leaving Teheran till we arrive at Casbin, about a hundred miles distant. This town is the residence of a Prince Governor, and was once the capital of the kingdom; it has undergone a great change of fortune, but is sufficiently populous to carry on a tolerably extensive trade. We have taken a few opportunities of illustrating the manners and customs of the Persians as we proceeded; and the following account of the visit of an English officer to the Prince of Casbin will illustrate the fondness of the Eastern courtiers for flattery and adulation. "I did not stipulate for my privilege, as an Englishman, to be seated in the prince's presence, fearing that, if I did, I should not obtain an interview; so I was obliged to stand before him. I was presented by his mehmandar, whose motions of reverence I imitated. His highness's manner was haughty, but it seemed habitual and not assumed. He asked me several questions, mostly respecting himself. To these I always tried to give a reasonable answer; but the mehmandar, pretending to attribute my plainness of language to ignorance of idiom, turned everything I said into extravagant compliment to the prince, and then asked me if

that was not what I intended to say. To dissent was impossible; so I let him have his own way, and thus all parties were pleased."

Proceeding onwards in the road from Teheran to Tabriz, we arrive at the ruins of Sultameh. This was once a considerable and beautiful city; but nothing now remains of it but ruinous vestiges, of which the chief is the palace of the Sultan Khodabundah, by whom the city was built 600 years ago. A little farther northward is Zinjain, a large and populous town, forming the capital of the district of Khumseh, and governed by one of the king's sons. This town is provided with bazaars equal to those of almost any town in the Persian empire; one of them extends from the eastern to the western gate, and is covered throughout the whole length; the shops and stalls being provided with all the usual articles of consumption. From this bazaar another branches out, and terminates at the other end in the maidan, or great square.

We now approach that mountainous region which separates the Caspian from the Black Sea. A few miles beyond Sultameh a brick bridge crosses the river Kizil Oozan, which separates the provinces of Irak Ajemi and Azerbijan. The scenery in the neighbourhood of this bridge is exceedingly wild and rugged; immediately below the bridge, the river passes by a narrow channel between lofty precipitous mountains, which rise almost perpendicularly in rude rugged masses. At a little distance below the bridge are the remains of an ancient fort, standing on a detached rock of an irregular form.

In this immediate neighbourhood is Mount Ararat, certainly the most celebrated mountain in the world, since it is that on which the Sacred Record informs us the Ark of Noah rested when the waters of the Deluge had partly subsided. In the present day, this mountain is remarkable as being a point where three of the most extensive empires in the world meet each other:—the Russian empire, which spreads to the frozen regions on the north;—the Persian empire, which extends almost to the frontiers of India;—and the Turkish empire, which brings us to the central states of Europe; all meet at Mount Ararat, the only point where this confluence occurs. Mount Ararat is described as being most difficult of access. A Pacha of Bayazid, some years ago, tried to make the ascent to the highest summit. He departed from Bayazid with a large party of horsemen, at the most favourable season; and ascended the mountain on the Bayazid side, as high as he could on horseback. He caused three stations to be marked out on the ascent, where he built huts and collected provisions. He had no difficulty in crossing the region of snow near the upper part of the mountain; but when he came to the great cap of ice that covers the top of the cone, he could proceed no farther, because several of his men were there seized with violent oppressions of the chest, from the great rarefaction of the air. He had before offered large rewards to any one who should reach the top; but though many Koords who live at its base have attempted it, all have been equally unsuccessful. Besides the great rarefaction of the air, his men had to contend with dangers arising from falling ice, large pieces of which were constantly detaching themselves from the main body and rolling down. An immense chasm extends nearly half way down the mountain, in the deep recesses of which are vast masses of ice.

We have gone somewhat out of the route, for the sake of mentioning a spot so celebrated as Mount Ararat. We must now transport ourselves somewhat eastward, where the town of Tabriz lies in our line of route. Tabriz is about three miles and a half in circumference, and is surrounded by walls built of sun-burnt brick, with towers of kiln-burnt brick, placed at irregular distances along the walls. There are seven gates, at each of which guards are stationed; and they are closed an hour or two after sunset, and not opened again till the morning. Tabriz was formerly the second city of Persia, in size and importance; but it is now greatly diminished in wealth and population. The Ark Ali Shah (citadel of Ali Shah) is a structure, which was originally intended for a palace; but the prince afterwards converted it into a citadel. It contains within its limits, the remains of a mosque about eighty feet high, at the top of which are three small chambers, from whence a panoramic view of the surrounding country is obtained. When Mr. Morier was at Tabriz, a number of European workmen were fitting up the Ark Ali Shah as an arsenal. In the front yard was a range of guns and all the accompaniments of artillery. A numerous body of carpenters and wheelwrights were at work with European tools, superintended by an European mechanic. Farther on was a blacksmith's forge, worked with charcoal for want of coal. Then in another yard were piles of shot, with men filling cartridges, &c. Next succeeded a range of apartments, in which were saddlers, and workers of leather; and store-rooms for articles of various kinds.

To understand the motives for such an establishment, we must bear in mind that we are now near the frontiers of Russia, between which country and Persia frequent hostilities have taken place within the last twenty or thirty years; insomuch, that the effeminate habits and proceedings witnessed in Southern Persia would be utterly unable to compete with such a vigorous nation as Russia.

As we shall soon take leave of Persia, we will give Mr. Morier's description of one or two features characteristic of most Persian towns:—"There are *noises* peculiar to every city and country; and none are more distinct and characteristic than those of Persia. First, at the dawn of day, the *muezzins* are heard in a great variety of tones, calling the people to prayers from the tops of the mosques; these are mixed with the sounds of cow-horns, blown by the keepers of the *hummums*, to inform the women, who bathe before the men, that the baths are heated, and ready for their reception. The cow-horns set all the dogs in the city howling in a frightful manner. The asses of the town, generally beginning to bray about the same time, are answered by all the asses in the neighbourhood; a thousand cocks then intrude their shrill voices; which, with the other subsidiary noises of persons calling to each other, knocking at doors, cries of children, complete a din very unusual to the ears of an European. In the summer season, as the operations of domestic life are mostly performed in the open air, every noise is heard. At night, all sleep on the tops of their houses, their beds being spread upon their terraces, without any other covering over their heads than the vault of heaven. The poor seldom have a screen to keep them from the gaze of passengers; and as we generally rode out on horseback at a very early hour, we perceived, on the tops of the houses, people either still in bed, or just getting up; and certainly no sight was ever stranger. The women appeared to be always up the first, while the men were frequently seen lounging in bed long after the sun had risen." We may remark that there are many passages in Scripture which seem to indicate that the custom of sleeping on the housetop prevailed in the Jewish nation, and in other parts of Western Asia.

When Captain Keppel was at Tabriz, he once dined at the house of the Russian Chargé d'Affaires; and mentions it as a singular instance of the way in which natives of different countries find their way into foreign lands, that although all the party were Christians, and did not exceed twenty, there were present natives of France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Holland, Russia, England, Greece, Sclavonia, Armenia, Georgia, Arabia, and Persia; and among the servants in attendance were a Russian, a Persian, an Indian, a Turk, and a Kalmuk Tartar.

From Tabriz, different routes may be, and frequently are, taken to Europe; but that which we shall follow approaches pretty near to the Caspian Sea, and touches it at two points, Baku and Astrakhan.

The river Araxes forms the boundary between the Russian and Persian empires, at that part where Captain Keppel and his party crossed it. The river is here about a hundred yards in width; over which the party crossed in a boat made of the hollow trunk of a tree, the fibres of which formed a rope to secure it to the bank. In this frail bark the men and the baggage were transported over the river, while the horses were made to swim over. On crossing the river the party entered a tent, before which a number of women were busily engaged, some in manufacturing carpets, others in milking cattle, and others in making bread.

About half-way between Tabriz and Baku, is the town of Sheesha, containing about two thousand houses, of which three-fourths are inhabited by Tartars, and the remainder by Armenians. The present town was built about a century ago by a Tartar prince, but the remains of an older town are visible at the foot of an opposite hill. The lower parts of the houses are built of stone, and have shelving roofs of shingle. The town and fort are surrounded by a wall; but the natural advantages of the situation, on the top of an almost inaccessible rock, have left little occasion for artificial defence. The language spoken is a kind of Turkish dialect; but the inhabitants read and write in Persian; the costume also bears a nearer resemblance to the Persian.

Baku is situated on a small promontory which juts out into the Caspian Sea. It is a neat, though small sea-port town, built entirely of stone; and surrounded by a deep ditch and double wall of stone. The roofs of the houses are flat, and covered with a thick coating of naphtha. The town contains one Armenian church, and twenty mosques, with only one Russian church. The bazaar is small, but neat, and is much more cleanly than the generality of Asiatic bazaars. The population is computed at about four thousand persons, of whom nearly all are Tartars. The principal articles of commerce are common silk and various small wares of Russian manufacture. On the site of this town once stood a city, celebrated in the time of the Persian fire-worshippers for its sacred temples, on the altars of which blazed perpetual flames of fire, produced by ignited naphtha. Thousands of pilgrims used to pay an annual visit to this place, before the rapid spread of Mohammedanism had reduced to insignificance the religion of ancient Persia. Captain Keppel found at this spot the remains of a temple of this kind, attended by tribes who presepted a singular mixture of Tartar and Indian habits. Enclosed within a pentagonal wall, and standing nearly in the centre of a court, was a fire temple,—a small, square building, with three steps leading up to it from each face. Three bells of different sizes were suspended from the roof. At each corner was a hollow column, higher than the surrounding buildings, from the top of which issued a bright flame; and in the middle of the court was a large fire of ignited naphtha. The pentagon, which on the outside forms the wall, comprises in the interior nineteen small cells, each inhabited by a devotee. These devotees were Hindoos; but their language and manners had such a strong tinge of the Tartar race, that their Hindoo origin was almost concealed. A Brahmin was found engaged at his devotion in one of the cells; in another cell was an officiating priest of a particular sect of the Hindoos. These devotees were pilgrims who came from different parts of India, and who were accustomed to relieve each other every two or three years in watching the sacred fire, as they deem it. We may remark that every part of the soil in the neighbourhood is strongly impregnated with naphtha.

The next town of any note is Kuba, once the residence of a Tartar khan, but now garrisoned by the Russians. It contains about five thousand inhabitants, one third of whom are said to be Jews. Still farther to the north is the town of Durbund, the capital of one of the Russian provinces. The walls, which are very ancient, divide the town into three portions, of which the higher comprises the citadel, the middle constitutes the town; and the lowest is principally occupied by gardens. Here is shown the foundation of a house built by Peter the Great, who visited the town soon after it had come into the hands of Russia. The walls of the city are built of a compact stone of a dark colour; and sixty bastions protrude at regular intervals. One of the gates has an inscription in Russian; another has an inscription in Persian; one among many proofs of the mixed character of the place. Durbund has been successively in the hands of Turks, Tartars, Arabs, Persians, and Russians, and manifests the heterogeneous effects resulting from this circumstance. Here one of our English travellers paid a visit to the Russian commandant and his lady; and says:—“On my return to the room, the company, consisting of the officers of the regiment and the staff-officers of the garrison, were thronging in. I here saw, for the first time, the Russian salutation: Every officer, on entering, took the right hand of the hostess and pressed it to his lips; while she at the same moment kissed his cheek. Dinner was prefaced by a glass of brandy and a piece of salt fish. The ladies, of whom there were several, seated themselves together; the post of honour next our fair hostess was assigned to me as the stranger. The band played during dinner; after which the company (with the exception of myself, who took a siesta) sat down to cards.”

Farther northward we come to Kizliar, standing on the banks of the river Terek, at about forty miles' distance from the Caspian. This town and the dependant villages contain about twenty thousand inhabitants; of whom the greater numbers are Tartars, and nearly all the remainder Armenians, (for we have now pretty well lost all traces of the Persian race.) This town is a kind of limit between two different districts, as respects the mode of travelling; for the routes just described have been performed almost wholly on horseback, whereas the journey northward from Kizliar to St. Petersburg, by way of Astrakhan, is performed by carriage. These carriages—at least those em-

ployed between Kizliar and Astrakhan,—are four-wheeled open carriages, without springs, about five feet and a half long, three feet broad, and three deep; and drawn by three horses abreast, generally in as rude and inelegant a condition as the carriage itself.

The district from Kizliar to Astrakhan is, for the most part, dreary and sterile; over which the Tartar drivers conduct their vehicle in a fearless and vigilant manner. Arrived at Astrakhan, the English party whom we have hitherto accompanied, and whom we shall now leave, were ushered to the residence of a Scotch missionary, the Rev. Mr. Glen, whose pious and benevolent demeanour made a deep impression on Captain Keppel, who remarks:—“At no period of my life do I remember to have been impressed with so strong a feeling of devotion as on this evening. Few persons of the same general habits will understand my particular feelings. Few have ever been placed in the same situation under similar circumstances. Quitting countries once the most rich and populous, now the most desolate and lone, fulfilling in their calamities the decrees of Divine Providence; safe from the dangers of the desert, and from the barbarian tribes with whom every crime was common, I found myself in a religious sanctuary among my own countrymen, in whose countenances, whatever were the trivial errors of their belief, might be traced the purity of their lives, and that enthusiasm in the cause of religion which has caused them to become voluntary exiles: whose kindness promised me every comfort, and whose voices were gratefully raised to Heaven in my behalf.”

The city of Astrakhan is the most celebrated in the southern part of the Russian empire, being so situated as to command the commerce of the Caspian Sea. It is situated near the mouth of the great river Volga, at a distance of about eight hundred miles south-east of Moscow; and from it there is an uninterrupted water conveyance to St. Petersburg, twelve hundred miles distant. It ranks as the eighth city in the Russian empire, having a population of forty thousand persons. The town is irregularly built, and the houses present a singular medley of European and Asiatic taste; they are constructed principally of wood, and are between four and five thousand in number. There are four Armenian churches, twenty-five Greek churches (the national church of Russia), nineteen Mohammedan mosques, besides places of worship for various sects, both European and Asiatic. There is an academy for marine cadets; a Greek seminary for ecclesiastics; a high school; a district grammar school; and four inferior schools. The Kremlin, or citadel, is a large and beautiful building, containing the cathedral and the barracks; the former of which, like most ecclesiastical edifices in Russia, consists of a massive parallelogram with four small cupolas on the roof, and a large one in the centre, from which the building receives its light: the interior is splendidly decorated; and is prized among the Russians for containing a costly effigy of the Virgin,—six mitres inlaid with pearls and precious stones of large size,—a baptismal font of massive silver, ninety-eight pounds in weight,—and other costly articles. One of the most remarkable buildings is a mosque recently erected by a private wealthy Mohammedan, but shaped like the Christian churches of the East.

No city of Asia presents more striking features of Europe and Asia combined, than Astrakhan. The Russians form a considerable amount of the population, and are engaged in trade. The Tartars, belonging to three different classes or races, amount to about 10,000, and take up their abode in distinct suburbs of the city. The Armenians are among the most wealthy of the population, and have now nearly abandoned their peculiar national mode of dress, and have adopted the costume of Europe. The women, however, still walk abroad, covered from head to foot with an enormous white veil, which conceals the whole person, except a small part of the face. The Georgians of Astrakhan are mostly mechanics, or persons filling humble stations in life. The Hindoos and Chinese to be found at Astrakhan are only occasional visitors, with the exception of three or four hundred of the former, whose occupation is to lend out money at usurious interest; and as their accumulations are seconded by the utmost simplicity and parsimony in their mode of living, these Hindoos rise quickly into affluence. Although the regular population of Astrakhan is estimated at 40,000, yet it is supposed that at one particular season of the year, *i.e.*, the fishing season, there are no less than 30,000 additional visitors at Astrakhan, drawn thither principally on commercial pursuits. At this season the city presents a highly interesting scene of gaiety and bustle.

Having thus brought our fellow-travellers to Astrakhan, we may make a few remarks on the extraordinary district which separates it from the central parts of Persia. If we draw a straight line from Astrakhan to the south-west corner of the Caspian Sea, another straight line from this last point to the easternmost point of the Black Sea, and a third from the Black Sea to Astrakhan, we shall enclose a triangular district, whose longest side (along the Caspian) is about 700 miles, and the other two about 500 each. This district is, in a political sense, one of the most remarkable in Asia. It contains the boundary-lines between the extensive empires of Russia, Turkey, and Persia, and contains a population who care but little for the supreme authority of either of those countries. Georgians, Mingrelians, Circassians, Armenians, Tartars, Koords,—all are to be met with in this district, forming a kind of boundary between the more effeminate Persians on the south, and the rude Cosacks and Tartars on the north. Their religion varies as much as their origin and habits; Mohammedans, Armenian Christians, Russian Christians, Fire Worshippers, Worshippers of the Great Lama of Thibet,—all are to be found here.

These circumstances give a strangely mixed character to the towns situated in this district. Gradually they are losing their Persian or Turkish character, and are becoming every year more and more Russian, occasioned by the steady progress of this power in that direction. Still, however, the old institutions and habits are not done away with. A mosque may be found next to a Russian guard-house, or a flat-roofed Persian house may be near a Russian church; while both Russians and Persians are required to be constantly on the alert, to repel the bold mountaineers who repeatedly attack them, and who, deeming themselves the rightful owners of the country, look upon both the others as enemies. The persevering energy of the Russian government has, however, overcome so many difficulties and obstacles in this quarter, that the boundary between Russia and Persia does not differ widely from the line which we have supposed to be drawn from the east end of the Black Sea to the south-west extremity of the Caspian. Whether or not this boundary will be driven still farther southward, is a question which the future history of Central Asia can alone determine.

From Astrakhan to St Petersburgh is, as we have said, a distance of about twelve hundred miles. There are two reasons why it will not be necessary for us to follow our travellers along this road: 1st. We have made a point, in

our details hitherto, to avoid entering on subjects which have already been described in the *Saturday Magazine*: and in pursuance of this plan, we will refrain from entering at any length into Russian topography, since a considerable number of articles were devoted to that subject in our early volumes. 2nd. There is no country in Europe or Asia, presenting fewer points of interest than the flat country from Astrakhan to St. Petersburgh. No great city, except Moscow, is met with in this immense distance; and the inhabitants are so extremely scanty that nothing can be more dreary than many parts of this route. Nearly all English travellers who take this route try to get through it as rapidly as possible, knowing that there is little to interest them on the way. Colonel Conolly, a few years ago, in making the overland journey, hired a carriage for the Russian route, which he fitted up for day or night travelling; stored it with provisions; provided himself with furs and warm clothing, and lived, boarded, and slept in his carriage during the greater portion of a very rapid journey from St. Petersburgh to the Persian frontier. Inns are so few on the road, and provisions so bad, that some such plan as this is necessary to keep the demon of hunger away. Capt. Keppel, during a good portion of his journey, adopted a plan which he had many occasions to be thankful for: he fastened a tea-kettle to the saddle of his horse; and whenever he could not obtain warm beverage any other way, he would put a little tea and sugar into his kettle, obtain some milk if possible, add a requisite quantity of water, and manage to boil a cup of tea in a very few minutes: quite willing to dispense with the numerous conveniences of a tea-service. Overland travellers must, indeed, reckon on being deprived of many of the comforts found on ship-board; but the excitement attending scenes of travel frequently more than compensates for this deprivation.

We thus end our first overland route; which may be thus summed up. From Bombay across the Indian Ocean, to the Persian Gulf is about thirteen hundred miles:—from the south to the north of the Persian Gulf, six or seven hundred;—from the Persian Gulf to Mount Ararat, seven hundred;—from thence to Astrakhan, probably five hundred;—from Astrakhan to Moscow, eight hundred;—and from thence to St. Petersburgh, four hundred:—making about four thousand five hundred miles. These distances are estimated very roughly; and do not take in the turnings and windings of the roads necessarily taken; but they may serve to convey something like an idea of the real distance gone over.



EASTERN DORMITORY ON THE HOUSE-TOP.